

WAR of KINGS

When Earth was invaded by the shape-shifting Skrulls, the Inhumans and their king Black Bolt suffered grievous wounds. They were finally pushed past the breaking point. Black Bolt led them into space, where they took control of the empire of the ancient Kree, the alien race that genetically engineered the Inhumans.

Meanwhile, the rival Shi'Ar Imperium expanded under the rule of the despotic mutant Vulcan. Like the Kree, the Shi'Ar is a mature and advanced civilization, but under its ruthless Emperor it has prospered into the largest, most powerful culture in the galaxy.

Vulcan saw an opportunity to annex the Kree Empire while it was in a state of upheaval. During the state wedding between Crystal of the Inhuman Royal Family and Ronan of the Kree, Vulcan unleashed his Imperial Guard--made up of the elite of every race in the Shi'Ar Empire--in a callous first strike, and sent his war fleet to invade Kree space. Reeling from this savage attack, in which many Kree colony worlds were annihilated by mega-bombs, the Inhumans realized they were obliged to fight and overcome the Shi'Ar before any of their schemes of destiny could be achieved.

The war rages on, with both sides searching for any possible advantage over the other. But, in an isolated corner of space, Gorgon of the Inhuman Royal Family and Starbolt of the Imperial Guard are about to discover that there are deadlier things in the universe than each other...

To the savage world of Sakaar came the Hulk, exiled from Earth by his enemies. Rising from slave to king, he took a wife, shadow warrior Caiera the Oldstrong, wielder of the Old Power. Caiera died in the bomb that destroyed Crown City and sent the Hulk back to Earth in search of revenge... but her unborn son survived. His half-Shadow, half-Hulk blood has grown him broad and tall. With the guidance of the Shadow Priest Old Sam, he forges a path of destruction on his brutal world.

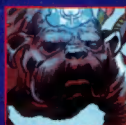
Some say he will be a savior; others a Worldbreaker. But for any who threaten his home, he is death...



BLACK BOLT



GORGON



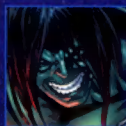
LOCKJAW



VULCAN



STARBOLT



SKAAR



OLD SAM

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DEEP SPACE. NO MAN'S LAND.



I'VE BEEN TO **SCORES** OF GALAXIES, AND I HAVE **NEVER** SEEN ENERGY EMISSIONS LIKE THESE.

HELMSMAN!
HOW IS IT WE WERE UNAWARE OF THIS PORTAL?

BUT WE **WERE** AWARE OF IT, SIR! IT'S ON OUR STARCHARTS AS A WHIRLPOOL...A NATURALLY OCCURRING WORMHOLE IN SPACE, TOO CHAOTIC FOR INTERSTELLAR TRAVEL...

...IT'S A HAZARD SHIPS ARE WARNED TO STEER CLEAR OF, LEST THEY BE SUCKED IN. BUT THERE ARE NO RECORDS OF IT EMITTING SUCH **POWER**.

I AM **STARBOLT**, A VETERAN OF THE **SHI'AR IMPERIAL GUARD**, THE FINEST WARRIORS IN ALL THE UNIVERSE.

I MUST REPEAT THIS TO MYSELF, LEST I FORGET THAT IT WOULD BE UNSEEMLY TO STRIKE A SUBORDINATE OFFICER...NO MATTER HOW **SLOW-WITTED** HE MAY BE.

PERHAPS THEN, HELMSMAN, WE SHOULD DETERMINE WHETHER THIS NEW DEVELOPMENT IS A **THREAT** TO EMPEROR VULCAN...OR SOMETHING HE CAN USE TO HIS **ADVANTAGE**.

Y-YES, SIR.

THE...THE ENERGY DOES NOT APPEAR **DIRECTED** AT US, SIR. RATHER, IT SEEMS TO BE RESIDUAL OVERSPILL FROM SOMETHING ON THE **OTHER SIDE** OF THE PORTAL.

Hm. IF THE **BACKWASH** IS THIS POWERFUL, IMAGINE WHAT A WEAPON THIS ENERGY SOURCE WOULD BE IF WE COULD **HARNESS** IT. HOW IT COULD AID US IN THE **WAR WITH THE KREE**--

INCOMING!
ENEMY SHIP ON AN INTERCEPT COURSE! SIR...

...IT'S **KREE!**

ATTENTION, SHI'AR SCUM! KNOW THAT **GORGON**, OF THE INHUMAN ROYAL FAMILY, HAS MARKED YOU FOR DEATH!





THOUGH
YOUR COWARDLY
ATTACK ON MY COUSIN'S
WEDDING BRANDS YOU
UNWORTHY OF
HONORABLE TREATMENT,
MY KING **BLACK BOLT**
IS NEVERTHELESS
MERCIFUL.

SURRENDER
NOW AND YOU
SHALL LIVE. THIS
IS YOUR **ONLY**
WARNING.

REFUSE. DAMN
YOU. COUNTLESS
SOULS CRY OUT
FOR VENGEANCE.

AH, THANK AGON.
IN YOUR NAME,
HONORED DEAD--

DIE,
CURSES!!

SUCH ARROGANCE! I'D
NEVER HAVE IMAGINED THE
KREE COULD GET **WORSE**.
BUT NOW THAT THEY'RE RULED
BY THESE **EARTHERS...**

HEAR ME,
INHUMAN. THIS IS
STARBOLT, OF THE
IMPERIAL GUARD.
AND **HERE** IS MY
ANSWER.

OPEN FIRE!
ALL WEAPONS!

THEIR
HEADS FOR THE
EMPEROR!



SIR, WE'RE HEADED
STRAIGHT FOR THE
WORMHOLE. ITS
GRAVITATIONAL
PULL--

MAINTAIN
COURSE! I WANT
THEIR SHIELDS
SHREDDED!

WE'RE BEING
PUSHED TOWARD
THE PORTAL--WE
MUST TAKE EVASIVE
ACTION!

RUN?
NEVER!
KEEP
FIRING!

YOUR
PARDON, SIR.
BUT IT WILL
SOON BE--



SSHHVAAAHHH

"--TOO LATE."



WE'RE
CAUGHT!
CAN'T...PULL
US OUT!

THE ENEMY IS
CAUGHT AS WELL.
IF WE DIE, KNOW
THAT WE DIED
VICTORIOUS.

STRAP
YOURSELVES IN!
CRASH
POSITIONS!



CONTROLS
AREN'T
RESPONDING!

CURSE ME FOR A FOOL.
I'VE PUT **VENGEANCE**
BEFORE THE MISSION.

MAYDAY, MAYDAY!
WE ARE CRASH-LANDING
ON AN UNIDENTIFIED
PLANET WITH VITAL DATA
ON THE WORMHOLE. ITS
ENERGY SPIKES AND
THE ENEMY!

CONTROL
DO YOU
READ? DO
YOU--



CONTROL TO
GORGON ~SKZZT~ SEND
LOCKJAW TO RETRIEVE
YOU. BUT ~ZZKZZ~
ESTIMATE TWELVE HOURS
TO LOCATE YOUR POSITION
DUE TO SPATIAL
DISTORTION...

...ADVISE MOVING
TO HIGH GROUND FOR
PROPER TRACKING
~ZZT~ ANY IDEA OF
YOUR LOCATION?



CONTROL
FROM GORGON.
POSITIONING SYSTEMS
DAMAGED. READINGS
INDICATE HABITABLE
ATMOSPHERE. WILL
ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY
PLANETARY
CHARACTERISTICS.
OVER.

CASUALTIES?



ONLY MINOR
BRUISES, SIR. THE
CRASH SEATS
PROTECTED US.

GOOD. READY
WEAPONS...WE'RE GOING
OUTSIDE. IF WE RECOGNIZE
A NATIVE RACE OR STAR
FORMATION, IT'LL GET
RESCUE HERE THAT
MUCH FASTER.



YOURS.

CARELESS. I DRILL
CADETS EVERY DAY ON
RINTAR'S "THE ART OF
BATTLE." YET FORGET ITS
TEACHINGS MYSELF.

"THE WARRIOR WHO
LOOKS AWAY FROM
HIS ENEMY LOOKS
TOWARD DEATH."

FIRE! USE
THE SHIP AS
COVER!



I'LL TAKE TO
THE AIR. STRIKE
FROM ABOVE.

THAT
RUMBLING--
WHAT--

GORGON
STAMPING HIS BESTIAL
FOOT, NO DOUBT. IF
THAT'S THE BEST HE CAN
DO, WE HAVE NOTHING
TO FEAR.

BUT IT'S
COMING FROM
THE OTHER--





STAND YOUR GROUND!

KRAAAA



STAY STRONG!
THEY SEEM TO BE
AFTER THE SHIP, NOT
US! IF WE CAN
WITHSTAND THE
INITIAL SWARM,
WE'LL BE--

--AH.



SURVIVORS,
SOUND OFF!
ANYONE...?

DAMN IT, K'YTHRI
SPEED THEM TO
THEIR REST.



AWAY,
VULTURE!

FERAL ROBOT
HERDS...WHAT
MANNER OF
PLACE...?



NOTHING
LEFT.

THEN I
AM TRULY
STRANDED
HERE.

BUT I
AM NOT.

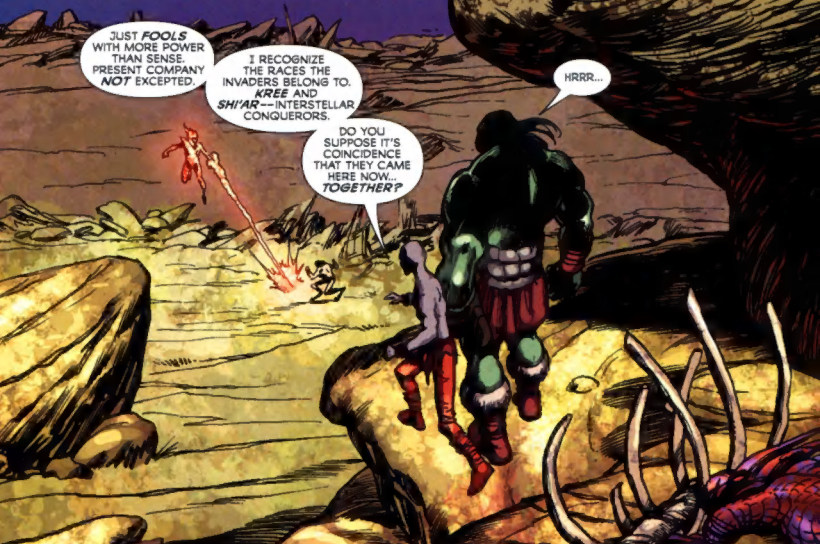


AND WHEN
MY PEOPLE
ARRIVE, THEY
WILL FIND
ME WITH A
PRISONER...

...OR A
CORPSE!

KRKR
KAMM





JUST FOOLS
WITH MORE POWER
THAN SENSE.
PRESENT COMPANY
NOT EXCEPTED.

I RECOGNIZE
THE RACES THE
INVADERS BELONG TO.
KREE AND
SHI'AR--INTERSTELLAR
CONQUERORS.

DO YOU
SUPPOSE IT'S
COINCIDENCE
THAT THEY CAME
HERE NOW...
TOGETHER?

HRRR...

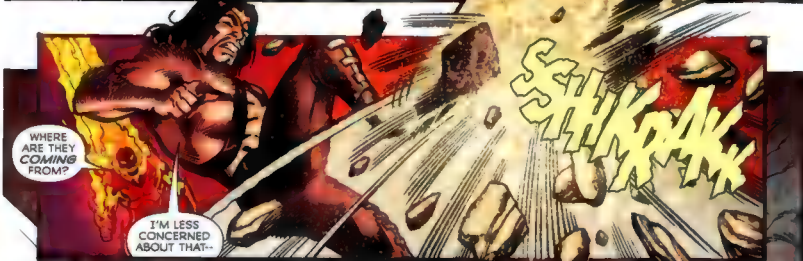
NOR DO I. IT WAS
YOUR RECKLESS USE OF
THE **OLD POWER** THAT
BROUGHT THEM HERE.
SKAAR. EMPIRES RESPOND
TO POWER IN ONLY
TWO WAYS.

THEY **CRUSH** IT...
OR THEY TAKE IT FOR
THEMSELVES.

NOW THEY'LL
NEVER LEAVE US
IN PEACE.

UNLESS THEIR
PEOPLE...

...NEVER HEAR
FROM THEM
AGAIN.





MIGHT AS WELL
AT THIS POINT, IT WON'T BE
ENOUGH TO RESTORE MY
ENERGY, BUT IT'LL SLOW
THE DECLINE...GIVE ME
TIME TO THINK.

I SAW WHAT APPEARED
TO BE POOLS
IN THE MOUNTAINS.
IF I CAN REACH ONE...



DEAD...AND IT
LOOKS FRESH.

THE ALPHA PRIMITIVES
WOULD GET QUITE A LAUGH
OUT OF THIS--A MEMBER OF
THE ROYAL FAMILY REDUCED
TO EATING CARRION. BUT I
AM NOT TOO PROUD TO--



WHAT--?

KRAAAGH!



RREEEE

BY
THE GREAT
REFUGE!



THEY BURN ON CONTACT, BUT
THERE ARE TOO MANY...THEY'LL
SOON SMOTHER MY FLAME
— DRAG ME DOWN, UNLESS...



AAGH!
FOUL BEAST!
YOU WANT A
TASTE?



NO!
I SHALL
BE FREE!



FEAST
ON THIS!

THRAAM

SHREEE!



EXPENDED TOO MUCH ENERGY...IF THERE ISN'T A HEAT SOURCE NEARBY, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER TO LET THOSE PLANTS DEVOUR ME.

DIDN'T WANT TO TAKE FLIGHT...IF MY POWER FADES MUCH FURTHER I'LL FALL TO MY DEATH...BUT I HAVE LITTLE CHOICE NOW...



THANK THE GODS! INFRARED SHOWS A STRONG HEAT SOURCE-- PROBABLY A MAGMA POOL AS BRIGHT AS IT'S GLOWING, IT'S GOT TO BE ABOVE GROUND.



AT LAST, COULDN'T HAVE STAYED ALOFT ANOTHER--

--SECOND--

**KR
NCH**

**GG
ROO
HAR**

NO EFFECT. NOT
SURPRISING--THE
CREATURE'S HABITAT
IS MOLTEN LAVA.

VERY WELL. I MEET
DEATH IN SERVICE
TO MY EMPEROR. I
PRAY SHARRA AND
K'YTHRI CAN FIND
MY SPIRIT ON THIS
GODFORSAKEN--



YOU HAVE
A TALENT FOR
MAKING ENEMIES,
GUARDSMAN.

SHUT YOUR
BARBARIC MOUTH,
INHUMAN. I WILL
NOT DIE WITH YOUR
TAUNTS IN MY
EARS.

YOU
NEEDN'T DIE
AT ALL. I WILL
GLADLY AID
YOU...

...IF
YOU'LL SIMPLY
SURRENDER TO
ME.

LATER.

WELL STRUCK, GUARDSMAN! SLAIN AND COOKED IN THE SAME STROKE. THE LARGER PORTION SHALL BE YOURS.

UNNECESSARY. MY SUSTENANCE CAME FROM THE MAGMA POOL. I NO LONGER REQUIRE FOOD.

"NO LONGER?" THEN ALL YOUR PEOPLE ARE NOT LIKE YOU?

NO, IGNORANT ONE. I UNDERWENT A TRANSFORMATION, LONG AGO... TO BETTER MY HOMEWORLD AND MY PEOPLE.

MY BODY WAS CONVERTED TO ENERGY. ITS PHYSICAL WEAKNESSES, ITS... ATTRIBUTES... ARE NO MORE.

THEN YOU--THAT IS TO SAY, YOU HAVE NO FAMILY?

I HAVE OUTLIVED THOSE I WAS BORN TO. AND IT IS... IMPRACTICAL... TO CONSIDER MARRIAGE.

DO NOT LOOK AT THAT WAY, OAF. SACRIFICE FOR ONE'S MONARCH IS NO FOREIGN CONCEPT TO YOU. OUR INTELLIGENCE INDICATES YOUR MONSTROUS FORM IS A RECENT MUTATION.

I... WAS MERELY THINKING THAT WE SHOULD MOVE ON. THERE'S MUCH CLIMBING TO BE DONE BEFORE DAWN.

IT'S A HOARY TRUISM THAT, BUT FOR CIRCUMSTANCES OF BIRTH, ONE MIGHT HAVE BEEN A FRIEND TO ONE'S ENEMIES. A TRUISM THAT HAS ALWAYS CHANGED THE NEED FOR WAR.

STARBOLT SET CRYSTAL ABLAZE IN HER WEDDING DRESS. IF SHE DID NOT CONTROL THE ELEMENTS, SHE'D HAVE DIED IN AGONY.

AND YET, HE FIGHTS WITH COURAGE...

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE IMPERIAL GUARD REGARD THE JOY I FIND IN BATTLE AS UNSEEMLY.

HA! NOR I.

HMMPH. MY COUSINS AS WELL, THOUGH I SELDOM HEAR COMPLAINTS WHEN WE'RE SURROUNDED BY BLASTER FIRE.

HE'S AS CRUDE AS OUR SPIES REPORTED. AND YET--AFTER THE INTRIGUE AND BACKSTABBING OF THE IMPERIAL PALACE, IT IS... REFRESHING TO SPEAK PLAINLY.

LOOK, DAWN IS BREAKING.

WE'LL HAVE A BETTER IDEA OF THE WE...



...AGON'S BONES.

OLD WOMAN!
THE DEVASTATION
HERE LOOKS
FRESH.

WHAT COULD
CAUSED
THIS?

A BATTLE,
STRANGER. BETWEEN
A WIELDER OF THE
OLD POWER...



...AGON THE SON
OF THE HULK, WHOSE
MOTHER COMMANDED
THE OLD POWER...AND
WHO CLAIMS IT AS HIS
BIRTHRIGHT.

THE
SON
OF--?



"HULK?" THE NAME
IS A STRANGE ONE TO
ME. BUT YOU LOOK AS IF
SOMEONE HAS SET YOUR
FIRE. WHAT
DOES IT MEAN?

IT MEANS
THAT THIS
"OLD POWER"
IS MIGHTY
INDEED.

AND THAT THIS
PLANET HOLDS EVEN
GREATER PERIL
THAN WE REALIZED.
IT BEHOVES US TO
LEAVE IT AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE.



THAT'S THE FIRST
SMART THING I'VE
HEARD FROM
EITHER OF YOU.



YOU SHOWED
MORE SENSE THAN I
GAVE YOU CREDIT FOR.
HELPING EACH OTHER
SURVIVE THE NIGHT.
COULD BE YOU'RE
SMARTER THAN
YOU LOOK.

IF YOU ARE,
YOU'LL LEAVE THIS
PLANET AND NEVER
COME BACK. BECAUSE IF
YOU EVER BRING ANY
OF YOUR PEOPLE
HERE...

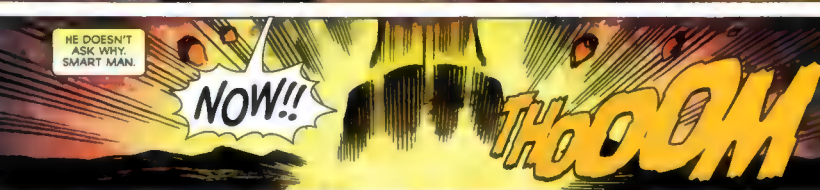
...I'LL KILL
THEM. AND
YOU.

IGNORANT SAVAGE.
YOU WOULD
THREATEN A MEMBER
OF THE *SHI'AR*
IMPERIAL
GUARD?

KNOW, CREATURE,
THAT YOUR *SIRE*--THE
HULK--ATTACKED MY
PEOPLE NOT LONG
AGO.

WE *WITHSTOOD*
THE WRATH OF THE
IMPERIAL. WE DO NOT
FEAR THE *MON*.

YOUR
MISTAKE.





DON'T WORRY.
I MAY NOT BE A
MEMBER OF OUR
SCIENCE COUNCIL,
BUT I CAN DEDUCE
THAT YOUR UNIFORM
IS FIREPROOF.

DID WE...
DID WE
WIN...?

AYE. THE
SON OF THE
HULK IS
DEAD.







THE SHI'AR THROWN WORLD.



COMMANDER
STARBOLT? WHERE
DID YOU--

STOP YOUR
IDIOTIC GAPING
AND TAKE THIS
PRISONER INTO
CUSTODY!

BOTH
OF THEM,
SIR?

BOTH--?

YOU WERE
RIGHT.

LOCKJAW
IS SMARTER
THAN US.



EVERYONE
DOWN!

FZZAT

PRAY TO
YOUR GODS YOU
NEVER SEE ME
AGAIN, STARBOLT.
FOR WHEN YOU
DO...



...IT WILL MEAN
YOUR DEATH IS
NIGH.

FASH



LATER.

...REGRETTABLY, MY LADY MEDUSA, STARBOLT SURVIVED. MY FIRST CONCERN WAS LUNA, SINCE IT WAS MY LACK OF JUDGMENT THAT PLACED HER IN DANGER.

YOU ACTED PROPERLY, GORGON. DO NOT FEAR. YOU SHALL HAVE YOUR RECKONING WITH THE SHI'AR SOON ENOUGH.

BUT YOUR LORD **BLACK BOLT** WISHES TO KNOW...WHAT DID YOU LEARN WHILE STRANDED ON THIS..."**SAKAAR**," I BELIEVE YOU SAID THE NATIVES CALL IT?

IS THERE ANYTHING ABOUT IT WORTH **BOTHERING** WITH? OR WAS YOUR WHOLE TRIP A COLOSSAL WASTE OF TIME?

THE PLANET ITSELF IS A BARBARIC **BACKWATER**, EMPEROR VULCAN. A **DEATHTRAP** RIFE WITH MONSTERS AND INHOSPITABLE TERRAIN.

HOWEVER, I **DID** COME ACROSS ONE NOTEWORTHY FEATURE. IT IS NOT AN ASPECT OF THE **PLANET** AT ALL...BUT RATHER, AN **ELEMENTAL FORCE** MANIPULATED BY CERTAIN OF ITS **RESIDENTS**.

NOMADIC PRIESTS CALLED THE **SHADOW PEOPLE**, WHO ROAM THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY.

THEY CALL IT THE "**OLD POWER**," AND ANY WHO WIELD IT GAIN THE ABILITY TO **TEAR A PLANET ASUNDER**.

ACCORDING TO OUR READINGS, IT WAS **USE** OF THE OLD POWER THAT CREATED THE **ENERGY SPIKES** THAT DREW US TO THE WORMHOLE TO BEGIN WITH.

INTERESTING.

VERY INTERESTING.

A GREEN GIANT SCAN



**LIKE IT?
BUY IT!**